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Helping to restore dignity in education

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basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



ASIDI
Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative

ASIDI begins to bear fruit

There is a quiet social revolution taking place all over the country that is set to transform the lives of thousands of South African children. At the dawn of majority rule, South Africa inherited a large number of schools in all provinces without water, sanitation and electricity, the bulk of the challenge being in the Eastern Cape. At the same time, there are schools that were constructed from inappropriate materials that need to be replaced. The accelerated schools infrastructure delivery initiative (ASIDI) is precisely what its name suggests; a programme to implement basic safety norms and standards, in infrastructure, for schools. ASIDI is funded from the Schools Infrastructure Backlog Grant (SIBG).



The scope of the programme comprises the following:

- ✓ 510 schools that were built with inappropriate structures are being replaced with brand new schools that meet the department's standards of basic functionality.
- ✓ 939 schools that previously did not have any access to sanitation will be supplied with a basic level of sanitation
- ✓ 932 schools will get electricity for the first time
- ✓ 1145 will be provided with basic water supplies for the first time.

Quarterly Update

This is the first of what will be quarterly updates to stakeholders. The Department of Basic Education is making headway in gradually banishing the legacy of apartheid in South African schools. The ASIDI targets for 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 were:

- To replace 49 inappropriate structures with new schools
- To connect 190 schools to electricity supply
- To provide 237 schools with sanitation facilities
- To give 173 schools access to water.

What the Department of Basic Education has achieved so far:

- 10 of the 49 inappropriate schools have been completed since the beginning of 2012
- 107 schools have been electrified countrywide
- 144 schools have been provided with sanitation countrywide and
- 102 schools have been provided with water countrywide



Development Impact



There is, naturally, a socio economic component to ASIDI's work. The developmental impact in various sectors of the economy is telling. The work done to date has created over a thousand jobs with the associated downstream effects on the local economy. At any given point between March and October 2012, there were between 1115 and 3143 people employed at the various sites. The future for over 11 000 learners in the affected local communities will significantly brighten with the vastly improved learning facilities. The benefits from the water and sanitation programme are a further step in the department's quest to restore dignity in education. Prior to the completion of the projects reported on, learners had to contend with fetching water and run home to use sanitation facilities there on a daily basis. Much remains to be done, but it can be fairly concluded that the department is on the right track. With the much improved facilities, learners and teachers have less to worry about an enabling environment and can rightly focus more on teaching and learning respectively. In addition, local communities stand to benefit from use of the facilities in the future.

Asidi Project Manager, Tsholofelo Diale

Tsholofelo holds a BSC degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Cape Town. Since then, she has amassed a decade of experience working for civil, structural and project management consulting companies in various provinces of the country. She joined the Department of Basic Education in October 2011 to manage the ASIDI programme. The ASIDI brief spoke to her.



AB: You have been in the job for just over a year. What have you and your team achieved thus far?

TD: I believe we have made a substantial amount of progress towards achieving ASIDI objectives.

Firstly, At **Programme Planning stage** we compiled the ASIDI Infrastructure programme implementation plan. The plan considers all the aspects involved in the programme from a project management perspective and provides a clear action plan in the implementation process of ASIDI. This is a fundamental document which gives a road map for the implementation of the programme. Secondly, we assessed 80% of the ASIDI project list in an attempt to establish the scope and cost, which informs ASIDI budgets and realistic implementation timelines. Thirdly, we procured implementing agents for the ASIDI sub-programme targets, implementation of which started in 2011/12 to date. We are also in the process of finalising Framework Agreements (with contractors, professional service providers and implementing agents), a resource which will increase our pool of service providers and will assist us in reducing the length of procurement to days.

At Implementation Planning; professional service provider procurement; design; contractor procurement and construction stages, practical completion and handover, all four sub programmes are at various stages. Of the 2011/12 to 2012/13 targets, We are at over 80% with progress on the 49 inappropriate schools in construction,

80% of the electrification projects have been completed, 68% of the sanitation projects have been completed and 63% of the water projects have been completed. We have finished the procurement of implementing agents for the implementation of our 2012/13 to 2013/14 plans. These plans will see us providing all schools on the ASIDI programme with water, sanitation and electricity. We also intend to provide 150 to 200 inappropriate schools with new infrastructure.

AB: Anything you have not been happy about in the first year?

TD: What I've observed is that we encountered various challenges throughout the implementation value chain, which posed a high risk to the achievement of our targets. Starting with us at DBE, this is the first infrastructure programme to be implemented at National level; thus a lot of work in the beginning went into the establishment of systems in preparation for successful implementation. The implementing agents are also at various maturity levels in terms of their competence to carrying out the task at hand. We could not, therefore, completely rely on them to deliver as expected. Lack of consistency in service rendered by professional service providers both technical, project management and contract management to ensure successful implementation saw us go through a steep curve before making progress. It also did not help that many of the contractors were not familiar with the Eastern Cape landscape which came with its own logistical challenges leading to delays in resources getting to sites. In many instances, our schools are located in remote villages of the Eastern Cape with no proper access roads, no access to running water and located far from the ESKOM grid. This has had a negative ripple effect in delivery within projected time lines. Further to all these, the suppliers had not been sufficiently prepared for the amount of material the programme demanded and this resulted in huge shortages of some material and we had to put contingency plans in place. Last but not least, it has been a challenge for contractors to get the level of skilled workers necessary for certain trades on the job.

AB: You are delivering what is known as a complete school. Please elaborate.

TD: It basically means a school with classrooms, specialist classrooms such as a multimedia centre, nutrition centre, science laboratory, a multipurpose classroom, and basic services that include water, sanitation, electricity and storm water management.

ASIDI TEAM MEMBER PROFILE



AB: How does the department deal with non performing contractors?

TD: The Department does not conclude contracts directly with contractors and there is, therefore, very little or nothing it can do to deal with contractors to ensure that they improve their performance. However the department cannot continue to work with non performing contractors during the implementation of ASIDI. What we have done is to ensure that we build clauses into our contracts with implementing agents to ensure inclusion of the same in the contracts they enter into with both professional service providers and contractors. These clauses will enable implementing agents to monitor in-process defaulting by both professional service providers and contractors and to start the application of penalties right away instead of the traditional application of penalties at the end of a contract period. Also the clauses attempt to give the DBE the authority to step in should the implementing agent fail to correct defaults by the service providers.

AB: You have set up a panel of contractors. Explain the idea to us and how it will work.

TD: We are putting together framework agreements with implementing agents, professional service providers and contractors. These are transversal agreements. A panel, in this context, is a tool available to DBE, provinces and our implementing agents to procure from. It is meant to shorten procurement processes as it will comprise service providers who would have had their functionality evaluated successfully. Service providers will then be randomly requested to provide quotations, the evaluation of which should take a maximum of three weeks at most.

AB: On a personal note, you are a black female civil engineer running a multi-billion rand programme. Given the country's history and low number of female civil engineers, this must give you some satisfaction?

TD: It is certainly a great privilege which however comes with an enormous responsibility, but also the greatest of satisfaction. I will forever cherish the opportunity to be part of a team which is helping to restore dignity in education.



A success project management story out of Mpumalanga

The ASIDI programme is not the only infrastructure initiative managed by the DBE. The Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) is a schedule 4 grant administered by the DBE to supplement the ongoing infrastructure programme in provinces, including the maintenance programmes of the new and revamped structures built from the Schools Infrastructure Backlogs indirect grant. The main purpose of the grant is for the construction of new schools and additional spaces (specialist rooms), upgrading and rehabilitation as well as maintenance of new and existing school infrastructure. What follows is a success story from one of the projects under this grant.

Ezakheni Combined Boarding School was constructed in Gert Sibanda Region as a fast track project following complaints from the farming community of Twyfelhoek, an area on the outskirts of Driefontein settlement. They had raised and highlighted the challenges facing them on a daily basis to the Premier of Mpumalanga, Honourable DD Mabuza, during his visit to the area in 2008.

Challenges raised by the community to the Premier included, inter alia, the following:

- The high rate of unemployment amongst the youth.
- The lack of basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity
- The high rate of learner drop-out as their children were unable to further their studies beyond the primary level due to the remote location of secondary schools and the absence of reliable transport.

The Premier undertook to build a state of the art multi-purpose boarding school to mitigate the overall challenges of schooling in the area. The entire area of Driefontein, including the nearby farming communities, was declared a pilot project for the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), which was successfully launched in 2009 by the Minister of Rural Development.

As per the injunction of the Premier to build the boarding school, the Mpumalanga Department of Education, embarked on the consultative processes with the targeted communities, which resulted in the identification of six schools being earmarked for closure and their learners, educators and public service staff being accommodated at the boarding school. The schools that were scheduled to be closed down at the end of 2011 academic year were Edelsteen, Mahlose, Twyfelhoek, Bazenzele and Mooibank Primary Schools as well as Sinethemba Girls Secondary School.

Consultation process

In any major construction undertaking, it is important to engage the local community in discussion. A number of stakeholder consultative meetings over a wide range of topics were conducted as follows:

Schools/Stakeholders/community	Date	
Governing boards & management teams of all affected Schools	13 July 2010	
Parents meeting	19 July 2010	
Broader Stakeholders	30 July 2010	
	Venue	Date
Community	Twyfelhoek combined School (Donkerhoek)	20 October 2010
Stakeholders consultative in respect of the building of the Boarding School pilot project at Donkerhoek (Witbank Farm)	Edelsteen & Mooibank Primary Schools	11 November 2010
District CRDP Task Team stakeholders' consultative meeting with the district teacher formations and Principals of the five affected schools	Wakkeestroom Circuit Office	15 November 2010
Stakeholders' consultative meeting in respect of the concerns raised by Principals of the five affected schools	Wakkeestroom Circuit Office	25 March 2011
Stakeholders' consultative meeting in respect of the transfer of learners to the Boarding school at Donkerhoek	Siyethemba Girls Secondary School	22 May 2011

A success project management story out of Mpumalanga



Boys dormitory

The boarding school, among others things, provides the following educational benefits to the learners:

- Challenges of multi-graded teaching and learning which has not produced expected quality educational output will be eliminated.
- High rate of absenteeism, late-coming and drop-out will be drastically minimized.
- All learners will derive benefits of the national schools nutrition programme from one service point.
- Low staff retention due to the rural nature of the area will be addressed.
- Better provision of facilities such as library, laboratory, computer centre, sports field, etc.
- Provision of limited educator accommodation.
- Departmental vision of accelerating quality education delivery will be enhanced.
- Learners will benefit from professional services of child care workers.
- Free provisioning of stationery, textbooks and workbooks.
- Provisioning of the boarding school facilities in lieu of scholar transport.



The school, built within 12 months, consists of 4 classroom blocks x 7, 14 x toilet blocks, a hall, a school administration block, 45 x boarding facilities, 22 x ablution blocks, 22 x staff flats, hostel admin block, laboratory, 2 x Grade R classrooms, external works such as paving, electrical works, mechanical works including air conditioning and clean water supply. The boarding school comprises 24 classrooms and 16 dormitories each accommodating 66 learners. Physical learning resources include a library, laboratory, computer centre, multi-purpose hall, and a sports field with athletic tracks.



Science lab

A success project management story out of Mpumalanga



View of computer room



Computer elevation with air con

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